



THE
OCCASIONAL PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN BY

The Rt. Hon. Major General FITZPATRICK,

AND

Spoken by Mr. KEMBLE, *K.P.*

ON OPENING THE

THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE,

WITH SHAKESPEARE'S

M A C B E T H,

MONDAY, APRIL 21st. 1794.

Kemble

AS tender plants, which dread the boistrous gale,
Bloom in the shelter of a tranquil vale,
Beneath fair Freedom's all protecting wing
The Liberal Arts, secure from danger, spring;
Through ravag'd Europe now while discord reigns,
And War's dire conflicts desolate her plains,
O, lest they perish in this boasted age,
Once more the victims of barbarian rage,
Her shield to guard them let Britannia rear,
And fix, in safety, their Asylum here!
Here, where mild reason holds her temperate sway,
Where willing subjects equal laws obey.
Firm to that well pois'd system, which unites
With Order's blessings Freedom's sacred rights.
'Mid wrecks of Empires, England, be it thine,
A bright example to the world to shine,
Where Law, on Liberty's just basis rear'd,
Of all the Safeguard, is by all rever'd,
And stems alike, when clouds of discord low'r,
The Storms of Faction, and the Strides of Pow'r.
Hence have the Muses on the lists of Fame,
With pride, recorded many a British name;
And on their Votaries, in this lov'd abode,
Bright wreaths of never fading bays bestow'd;
True to the cause of ev'ry English bard,
'Tis your's the just inheritance to guard.
What, though his vaulting Pegasus disdain
The servile check of too severe a rein,
Like untaught Coursers of the Arab race,
He moves with freedom, energy, and grace;

With

With caution, then, the generous ardor tame,
 Lest, while you chasten, you repress the flame;
 Some licence temper'd judgement will permit
 To Congreve's, Wycherly's, or Vanburgh's wit;
 Nor, for an ill-timed ribald Jest, refuse
 A tear to Otway's, or to Southern's, Muse;
 But chief, with reverence watch his hallow'd bays,
 To whom this night a Monument we raise;
 Beyond what sculptur'd marble can bestow—
 The silent tribute of surviving woe—
 Beyond the pow'rs of undecaying brass,
 Or the proud Pyramid's unmeaning mass;
 A shrine more worthy of his fame we give,
 Where, unimpair'd, his genius still may live;
 Where, though his fire the Critic's rule transgress,
 The glowing bosom shall his cause confess;
 Where Britain's Sons, through each succeeding age,
 Shall hail the founder of our *English Stage*,
 And, from the cavils of pedantick Spleen
 Defend the glories of their Shakspeare's Scene.

EPILOGUE,

WRITTEN ON THE SAME OCCASION,

By GEORGE COLMAN, Jun. Esq.

And Spoken by Miss FARREN.

WHAT Part can speak—O, tell me, while I greet you—
 What Character expresses my joy to meet you!
 But Feeling says, no Character assume;
 Let Impulse dictate, and the Soul have room.
 Tame glides the smoothest Poem ever sung,
 To the Heart's language, gushing o'er the tongue:
 Cold the Address the ablest Scholar drew,
 To the warm glow of crying—Welcome, You!
 Welcome! thrice welcome! to our new rear'd Stage!
 To this new æra of our Drama's Age!
 Genius of Shakspeare, as in air you roam,
 Spread your broad wings exulting o'er our Dome!
 Shade of our Roscius, view us with delight,
 And hover smiling round your favourite Site!
 But to my purpose here—for I am sent,
 On deeds of import, and of deep intent;
 Passion has had it's scope, the burst is past;
 And I may sink to *Character* at last.
 When some rich Noble, vain of his virtù,
 Permits the curious croud his House to view,

When

When Pictures, Busts, and Bronzes, to display,
 He treats the Public with a public day,
 That all the World may in their minds retain them,
 He bids his dawdling Housekeeper explain them:
 Herself, when each Original's inspected;
 The greatest, that his Lordship has collected.
 A House now opens, which, we trust, ensures
 The Approbation of the *Amateurs*;
 Each part, each quality,—'tis fit you know it—
 And I'm the Housekeeper employ'd to shew it.
 Our pile is rock, more durable than brass,
 Our decorations, Gossamer, and Gas.
 Weighty, yet airy in effect, our plan,
 Solid, tho' light,—like a thin Alderman,
 " Blow wind, come wreck" in ages yet unborn,
 " Our Castle's strength shall laugh a siege to scorn."
 The very ravages of fire we scout,
 For we have wherewithal to put it out.
 In ample Reservoirs our firm reliance,
 Whose streams set Conflagration at defiance.
 Panic alone avoid, let none begin it—
 Shou'd the flame spread, sit still, there's nothing in it;
 We'll undertake to drown you all in half a minute. }
 Behold, obedient to the Prompter's bell,
 Our tide shall flow, and real waters swell.
 No River of meandering pasteboard made,
 No gentle tinkling of a tin cascade,
 No Brook of broad cloth shall be set in motion,
 No ships be wreck'd upon a wooden ocean,
 But the pure element it's course shall hold
 Rush on the Scene and o'er our Stage be roll'd.*
 How like you our Aquatics?—need we fear
 Some Critick with a Hydrophobia here,
 Whose timid caution caution's self might tire,
 And doubts, if water can extinguish fire?
 If such there be, still let him rest secure;
 For we have made " Assurance double sure."
 Consume the *Scenes*, your safety yet is certain,
 Presto! for proof, let down the *Iron Curtain*. †
 Ah ye, who live in this our brazen age,
 Think on the comforts of an Iron Stage,
 Fenc'd by that mass, no perils do environ
 The man who calmly sits before cold iron—
 For those who in the Green Room sit behind it,
 They e'en must quench the danger as they find it:
 A little fire would do no harm, we know it,
 To modern Actor, nor to modern Poet.

To

* Here the Scene rises, and discovers the water, &c, &c.

† Here the Iron Curtain is let down.

[But Beaux, and ye Plum'd belles, all perch'd in front,
 You're safe at all events, depend upon't:
 So never rise like flutter'd birds together,
 The hottest fire shan't singe a single feather;
 No, I assure our generous Benefactors

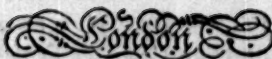
† I would only burn the *Scenery* and the *Actors*]

Here ends as Housekeeper my explanation;
 And may the House receive your approbation!
 For you, in air, the vaulted roof we raise;
 Tho' firm it's base, it's best support your praise.
 Stamp then your mighty seal upon our cause!
 Give us, ye Gods, a thunder of applause!

The high decree is past—may future age,
 When pondering o'er the annals of our Stage,
 Rest on this time, when labour rear'd the pile,
 In tribute to the genius of our isle;
 This school of art, with British sanction grac'd,
 And worthy of a manly nation's taste!
 And now the Image of our Shakspeare view,
 And give the Drama's God the honour due. †

† Here the Iron Curtain is taken up, and discovers the Statue of
 Shakspeare, under a Mulberry Tree, &c. &c.

†† The six lines in Crotchets, were given by a Friend.



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